



STATE OF WASHINGTON  
PUBLIC DISCLOSURE COMMISSION

711 Capitol Way Rm 206, PO Box 40908 \* Olympia, Washington 98504-0908 \* (360) 753-1111 \* Fax (360) 753-1112  
Toll Free 1-877-601-2828 \* E-mail: [pdc@pdc.wa.gov](mailto:pdc@pdc.wa.gov) \* Website: [www.pdc.wa.gov](http://www.pdc.wa.gov)

April 4, 2005

JOHN LADENBURG, PIERCE COUNTY EXECUTIVE  
C/O PIERCE COUNTY PROSECUTING ATTORNEY'S OFFICE  
RONALD L. WILLIAMS, DEPUTY PROSECUTING ATTORNEY  
955 TACOMA AVENUE SOUTH, SUITE 301  
TACOMA WA 98402-2160

Subject: Complaint filed by David L. Franta, Dale Washam, and Donald R. Veal, Alleging  
Violation of RCW 42.17.130 – PDC Case No. 04-440

Dear Mr. Ladenburg:

The Public Disclosure Commission (PDC) staff has completed its investigation of the complaint filed by David L. Franta, Dale Washam, and Donald R. Veal against you. With respect to your actions that were alleged in the complaint to have violated RCW 42.17.130, those alleged actions occurred during a time a court injunction was in effect and when the constitutionality of the statute was being considered by the courts. Your alleged actions also occurred during a time the PDC staff did not answer questions or provide guidance to your office regarding the law, as it otherwise normally would have done. In light of these unusual circumstances, with the concurrence of the Public Disclosure Commission, I have dismissed the complaint filed by Mr. Franta, Mr. Washam, and Mr. Veal alleging that you violated RCW 42.17.130 by promoting passage of Proposition #1 on the 2003 general election ballot. Enclosed is a copy of the dismissal letter sent to the complainant.

PDC staff believes there is evidence that you used the facilities of Pierce County to promote passage of Proposition 1 in violation of RCW 42.17.130 by publishing and distributing two postcards that were not a fair and objective presentation of the facts, and that were targeted to registered voters. However, because this action occurred during a time when no guidance was available from PDC staff, we will not be taking enforcement action in this instance. I caution you to be aware of the actions you take in your official capacity as Pierce County Executive, and that you avoid using public facilities in a manner that may promote or oppose a ballot proposition. Please carefully review the content of future County publications and refrain from using language that promotes or opposes any ballot measure. In the future, if it appears to PDC staff that you used or authorized the use of public facilities in violation of RCW 42.17.130, enforcement action will likely be taken against you.

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*"The public's right to know of the financing of political campaigns and lobbying  
and the financial affairs of elected officials and candidates far outweighs  
any right that these matters remain secret and private."*

RCW 42.17.010 (10)



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If you have questions, please feel free to contact Phil Stutzman, Director of Compliance, at (360) 664-8853 or toll free at 1-877-601-2828.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Vicki Rippie". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end.

Vicki Rippie  
Executive Director

Enclosure